

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 5394

E.O. 11653: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MNUC, NPG, PARM, NO
SUBJ: GON SHIFTS TO POSITION ON ENHANCED RADIATION WARHEAD (ERW)

REF: A(A) OSLO 4870 (B) OSLO 4657

1. FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND, WHO HAD INITIALLY HOPED TO AVOID TAKING ANY PUBLIC STANCE ON THE ENHANCED RADIATION WARHEAD (REFA), HAS NOW SOUGHT TO ADDRESS THE "NEUTRON BOMB" QUESTION SOLELY WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF BROADER DISARMAMENT ISSUES.

2. IN THE COURSE OF HIS NOVEMBER 23 ADDRESS TO THE STORTING, IN WHICH FRYDENLUND OTHERWISE LIMITED HIMSELF LARGELY TO RESTATEMENTS OF EXISTING GON POLICIES, HE FINISHED HIS REMARKS ON DISARMEMENT WITH A REFERENCE TO THE ONGOING NATO TALKS ON THE ERW. HE SAID THAT IN THESE TALKS, "NORWAY HAS PLACED DECISIVE EMPHASIS ON THE EFFECTS WHICH A POSSIBLE INTRODUCTION OF THE NEUTRON BOMB IN THE AMERICAN OPERATIONAL UNITS IN WESTERN EUROPE WOULD HAVE ON THE NEGOTIATIONS ON DISARMEMENT AND
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ARMS CONTROL. THE NUCLEAR POWERS' CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR ARMS REPRESENTS AN ADDED DANGER FOR HUMANITY. DURING THESE CONTINUED NEGOTIATIONS IN THE NATO COUNCIL THE GOVERNMENT WILL URGE THAT THE U.S. AND THE SOVIET UNION AND OTHER NUCLEAR POWERS MUST REACH AGREEMENT ON PUTTING A STOP TO THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR ARMS AND THAT THE NEUTRON BOMB MUST BE DULY

CONSIDERED IN THIS CONTEXT."

3. IN A SUBSEQUENT TV INTERVIEW ON NOVEMBER 28, FRYDEN LUND, WHEN QUESTIONED ON THE NEUTRON BOMB, MERELY RESTATED IN BRIEF HIS NOVEMBER 23 STATEMENT AND AVOIDED AMPLIFYING COMMENT.

4. MFA SECRETARY GENERAL KRISTIANSEN, IN A NOVEMBER 29 DISCUSSION WITH DCM AGREED THAT THE FRYDENLUND STATEMENT REPRESENTED A CHANGE IN GON THINKING ON THE NEUTRON BOMB. THE SHIFT, HE SAID, WAS NEGATIVE IN NATURE AND REFLECTED THE TENOR OF INTERNAL GON DEBATE ON THE ISSUE. DCM EXPRESSED THAT FRYDENLUND'S COMMENT MADE NO REFERENCE TO WEAPONS' MILITARY AND DEFENSEIVE ASPECTS WHICH AFTER ALL WERE NOT IRRELEVANT T THE DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUE.

5. COMMENT: BY PLACING THE NORWY/NEUTRON BOMB QUESTION ENTIRELY UNDER THE DISARMAMENT CACHET (AND AVOIDING FORMULATION OF ANY GON POSITION ON DEVELOPMENT/ DEPLOYMENT IN THE ABSENCE OF A BROADER ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENT), FRYDENLUND HAS PROVIDED THE GON WITH SOME PROTECTION FROM ASSULT BY THE NORWEGIAN FAR LEFT. IN RECENT YEARS, THE LABOR GOVERNMENT'S MOST VOCAL OPPOSITION HAS COME NOT FROM THE NUMERICALLY SUPERIOR NON-SOCIALIST FACTION, BUT, RATHER, FROM THE FAR LEFT, PARTICULARLY THE LEFT SOCIALIST (SV) PARTY AND ITS CONFIDENTIAL

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ALLIED. THE NEUTRON BOMB QUESTION, WITH WHICH SV (AND LABOR'S OWN LEFT WING) COULD ENLIST A BROAD SPECTRUM OF THE TRADITIONALLY ANTI-NUCLEAR NORWEGIAN PUBLIC, IS THUS AN IDEAL ISSUE FOR SV TO PUT IN PLAY AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT. FRYDENLUND'S MOVE TO PLACE THE NORWEGIAN ERW DECISION WITHIN A PURELY DISARMAMENT CONTEXT GIVES THE GON PROTECTION FROM ITS MOST HARSH CRITICS AND PROVIDES SOME HOPE THAT, IN TIME, THE QUESTION MAY BE DECIDED BY PROCESSES THAT DO NOT DIRECTLY INVOLVE THE GON. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, FRYDENLUND MAY HAVE MADE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR NORWAY TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY FUTURE ALLIANCE DECISION IN FAVOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND DEPLOYMENT OF THE NEW WEAPON. BREMER

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